

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

US Senator Charles E. Schumer's 2005 Agenda for Upstate New York

US Senator Charles E. Schumer, who was sworn in for a second term in the Senate on Tuesday, today released the following 2005 agenda.

Among the issues that will affect all New Yorkers, Schumer will push the following priorities in Congress this year:

- **Making College more affordable for New York families:** Schumer will use his new post on the Finance Committee— which oversees tax policy— to increase the amount of college tuition that hard working upstate New York families can deduct from their taxes from \$4,000 to \$12,000.
- **Giving New Yorkers access to lower cost prescription drugs from Canada:** Schumer will fight to legalize the safe reimportation of lower priced prescription drugs from Canada to save New Yorkers thousands of dollars a year on their health care costs.
- **Fully funding the No Child Left Behind and IDEA programs for upstate New York schools:** Schumer said that he will fight to bring home the full amount of federal funding promised to schools in upstate New York under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). Congress has promised \$22.75 billion in Title I of NCLB funding and \$23.46 billion in IDEA funding nationwide and Schumer said that he will fight to see that New York schools get every penny promised under the bills.
- **Fighting proposals to eliminate the state and local tax deduction:** The Administration may propose a change in the tax code that would eliminate tax payers' ability to deduct their state and local taxes. It is estimated that this proposal could cost New Yorkers an estimated 3.2 million New Yorkers \$37 billion per year. Schumer will use his position on the Senate Finance Committee, which must approve any such proposal, to fight to save these critical deductions for New Yorkers statewide.
- **Preserving Social Security:** Schumer said that he will also work with his colleagues in the Senate to strengthen and preserve Social Security. Schumer said that social security reform will be a focus of the Senate Finance Committee this year and that he will fight to ensure the social safety net remains strong for New York seniors and for generations to come.

- **Protecting Medicaid and Medicare:** As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, he will fight both to protect and improve these important safety nets while many in Congress want to cut or block-grant them. In addition Medicaid costs are stressing New York State and County budgets like never before, and it hurts New York homeowners and their families who are facing ever-higher property tax bills. Schumer will fight to reduce the property tax burden that Medicaid costs have levied throughout the State.
- **Increasing Grants to Local Fire and Police Departments:** Schumer said that he will fight to increase the federal dollars that are sent to local fire and police departments throughout upstate New York. Schumer said that he will fight to send the full \$950 million in Fiscal Year 2006 in funding promised by Congress to fire departments – an increase of more than \$200 million over this year- and to significantly increase funding levels for the COPS grant program over the \$606 million FY05 level.
- **Protecting upstate New York's dairy farmers:** Schumer said that protecting local dairy farmers from low milk prices will continue to be a priority. With the MILC program set to expire late this year, Schumer intends to make preserving a system to give New York's dairy farmers they support they need a major priority in the coming year. Last year, Schumer joined Senator Specter as the leading sponsors of the National Dairy Equity Act, which would would act like a regional dairy pact and would serve as an alternative to the current MILC program that could boost the income of New York's dairy farmers by \$53 million more than under MILC annually and save the federal government hundreds of millions of dollars . Schumer looks forward to continuing the fight for New York's dairy farmers in the new Congress

Schumer also released the following agenda focused on boosting the local economy and job market and improving the lives of residents from **each region of upstate New York:**

CAPITAL REGION AGENDA

Schumer's agenda to boost the local economy and job market and improve the lives of residents in the Capital Region includes the following:

Promoting the local new energy industry: Schumer, who helped to create the "New Energy New York" consortium, and has secured federal funds to help the group promote the Capital Region's burgeoning energy industry, will continue to support efforts to make the region a center of new and alternative energy technology.

Improving rail service in the Capital Region: Schumer will continue to fight for increased funding for Amtrak, which is important not only to the day-to-day service, but to the future of high speed rail in New York State. In addition, Schumer will continue to fight for beefed up security for all trains, and for federal reimbursement to localities for costs they incur for

providing increased security.

Saving the Watervliet Arsenal and the Stratton Air Guard under the BRAC program: Schumer will focus this year on fighting for both the Watervliet Arsenal and the Stratton Air Guard to remain open under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program, which is the process used by the Department of Defense to reorganize, grow and or downsize military facilities. Schumer, who has helped the Watervliet Arsenal secure more than \$100 million for Navy contracts, and to rehabilitate space on the site, said he will continue to stress the fact that the Watervliet Arsenal is extremely valuable to our nation's defense because it is the sole manufacturer of large caliber cannons used by several branches of the armed forces in Iraq and in Afghanistan, noting that the Arsenal is the only facility that is equipped to replace any of these cannons damaged in the war. In addition, Schumer said that he would like to see the Arsenal's production of Humvee and truck armor increased, given the pressing need for these retrofit improvements in Iraq. Schumer also said that he will stress the importance of the Stratton Air Guard, which employs 1400 New Yorkers and has a \$93 million annual economic impact on the Capital Region. Stratton Air Guard's 109th Airlift Wing is the only ski deployable LC-130 force in the US.

CENTRAL NEW YORK AGENDA

Schumer's agenda to boost the local economy and job market and improve the lives of residents in Central New York includes the following:

Making NY Chocolate a success in Fulton: Schumer, who brokered a deal between Nestle and the Oswego County Industrial Development Agency in 2003 to allow a property transfer that would keep chocolate business and jobs at the site, will work with NY Chocolate on the next steps toward getting their business up and running and profitable. Schumer said specifically that he will help the company to identify retail outlets for its chocolate and also monitor trade issues with the Ivory Coast to ensure Fulton is not impacted by the turmoil.

Protecting Fort Drum, Hancock, and Rome Air Force Labs under the BRAC program: Schumer will fight to protect Central New York's military bases under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program. BRAC is the process used by the Department of Defense to reorganize, grow and or downsize military facilities. An aggressive effort will be necessary to ensure that the current BRAC round does not eliminate any further NY facilities and Schumer said that Fort Drum, Hancock and Rome Air Force Labs are among the best in the country.

Support for the Ethanol Plant in Fulton: Schumer will work to promote the Fulton ethanol plant, specifically by reviewing its business plan and strategizing with the plant on how to create jobs and energy initiatives in Central New York. Schumer is particularly interested in supporting spin off companies that could be supported by the Fulton ethanol plant to create more jobs for the region.

Opening and promoting the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Global Affairs Institute: Schumer, who secured \$10 million for the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Global Affairs Institute, will work

to make the March opening of the Institute a success and support its research by bringing worldwide attention to its critical endeavors.

Protecting Central New York's dairy farmers: Schumer said that protecting local dairy farmers from low milk prices will continue to be a priority. With the MILC program set to expire late this year, Schumer intends to make preserving a system to give New York's dairy farmers they support they need a major priority in the coming year. Last year, Schumer joined Senator Specter as the leading sponsors of the National Dairy Equity Act, which would act like a regional dairy pact and would serve as an alternative to the current MILC program that could boost the income of New York's dairy farmers by \$53 million more than under MILC annually and save the federal government hundreds of millions of dollars. Schumer looks forward to continuing the fight for New York's dairy farmers in the new Congress

HUDSON VALLEY AGENDA

Schumer's agenda to boost the local economy and job market and improve the lives of residents in the Hudson Valley includes the following:

Putting home ownership in the reach of middle-class families: Home prices continue to escalate in the Hudson Valley, putting homeownership out of the reach of many middle-class families. To help working families buy a house, Schumer will continue to work with Fannie Mae, Federal agencies and others to ease the housing price pressure. So far, Schumer has successfully lobbied Fannie Mae to allocate \$500 million for very low-down-payment mortgages with favorable terms for middle-income homebuyers in the Hudson Valley and Long Island. This year, Schumer will again work with Fannie Mae and key employers who want to consider offering housing assistance to their employees.

Expanding low cost air service at Stewart Airport: Schumer, who helped to bring Independence Air to Stewart Airport in 2004, will continue to work with other airlines to attract their low cost service to the airport. Schumer said he will emphasize to other airlines that the departure of Southeast has left a big market open for service to the Airport.

Securing refunds for Southeast customers with cancelled flights: Schumer has already publically demanded a full accounting of any money available for refunds for Southeast Airlines. Recent reports confirm that \$600,000 has been identified in an escrow fund for refunds and that a new independent receiver has been appointed to take control of Southeast's records and speed passenger refunds. Schumer will continue to push the airline and the authorities until all customers receive their due compensation.

Protecting the Montrose VA hospital: Schumer has met with local veterans to discuss the future of the hospital and testified in support of the hospital at the CARES Commission's hearing in Montrose. Schumer will continue his efforts to work with other members of the New York delegation and fight for the preservation of services at the Montrose VA through any available legislative or political means.

Fighting for funding for Hudson Valley's hospitals: Schumer will fight for more funding for struggling hospitals across the region, including Westchester Medical Center, a tertiary care center, and work to prevent cuts in funding to Benedictine Hospital when its current payment formula status expires in late 2005. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, Schumer will lead the fight to preserve and increase Medicare funding for New York's hospitals.

Protecting the Hudson Valley's dairy farmers: Schumer said that protecting local dairy farmers from low milk prices will continue to be a priority. With the MILC program set to expire late this year, Schumer intends to make preserving a system to give New York's dairy farmers they support they need a major priority in the coming year. Last year, Schumer joined Senator Specter as the leading sponsors of the National Dairy Equity Act, which would act like a regional dairy pact and would serve as an alternative to the current MILC program that could boost the income of New York's dairy farmers by \$53 million more than under MILC annually and save the federal government hundreds of millions of dollars. Schumer looks forward to continuing the fight for New York's dairy farmers in the new Congress

ROCHESTER/FINGER LAKES AGENDA

Schumer's agenda to boost the local economy and job market and improve the lives of residents in the Rochester/Finger Lakes area includes the following:

Getting the Fast Ferry up and running in 2005: Schumer, a long time advocate the need for a Rochester-Toronto fast ferry, will continue to work towards getting the ferry back up and running early next year. Last month, Schumer went to Rochester and urged the City Council to act swiftly to approve Mayor Johnson's plan to get the ferry up and running and said that he would provide whatever help and support necessary from Washington. Schumer will continue to work with EFIC, the Australian lender, to ensure the two countries are working well together and that fast ferry plans stay on course.

Ensuring Community involvement in plans for the Canandaigua VA Hospital: Schumer, who successfully blocked past attempts to close the Canandaigua VA hospital will work to find the best solution for the Canandaigua VA Hospital. This week, Schumer lobbied VA Secretary nominee Jim Nicholson to support the community advisory board currently deciding the fate of the Canandaigua VA Hospital. Schumer will keep pushing Nicholson to work with the community board to ensure that local veterans and local community leaders participate in the panel that will decide the ultimate fate of the hospital in the coming year.

Support for the Infotonics Center of Excellence: Schumer said that he would push for continued funding to support Rochester's National Center for Excellence in Infotonics. Schumer said that the center's state-of-the-art research and development laboratory has already brought jobs into the area and will continue to be a windfall for the area.

Protecting the Seneca Army Depot: The Army left the depot in disrepair after closing it a few years ago, making it difficult for Seneca County to develop the property. Schumer will continue his work, pressing the Army to make improvements to the Seneca Army Depot and attracting private investors

by marketing the military facilitate.

Protecting the Rochester/Finger Lakes area dairy farmers: Schumer said that protecting local dairy farmers from low milk prices will continue to be a priority. With the MILC program set to expire late this year, Schumer intends to make preserving a system to give New York's dairy farmers they support they need a major priority in the coming year. Last year, Schumer joined Senator Specter as the leading sponsors of the National Dairy Equity Act, which would would act like a regional dairy pact and would serve as an alternative to the current MILC program that could boost the income of New York's dairy farmers by \$53 million more than under MILC annually and save the federal government hundreds of millions of dollars . Schumer looks forward to continuing the fight for New York's dairy farmers in the new Congress

NORTH COUNTRY AGENDA

Schumer's agenda to boost the local economy and improve the lives of residents in the North Country area includes the following:

Bringing Boscov's to Glens Falls: Schumer will continue his efforts to bring Boscov's department store to Glens Falls by lobbying the officials at store. Schumer said that bringing Boscov's to the area will spur economic development and create jobs in the Glens Falls area.

Improving the Champlain border: Efforts to build and improve border facilities at the I-87 Champlain Border Crossing, which is one of the busiest crossings on the Northern Border and currently cannot handle the volume of commercial and civilian traffic, have fallen victim to vastly inadequate funding levels. Schumer has helped to secure more than \$40 million for this project, which should have been under construction currently but is not expected to break ground until Spring of 2005 and to be completed in 2008. Reconstruction of the "Champlain Port of Excellence," a project that is estimated at \$80 to \$100 million has been delayed in part due to funding issues. Schumer will continue to fight to advance this critical project.

Improving Northern Border security: Schumer will continue this year to push for greater protection for New York's northern border. Among the improvements needed, Schumer will push for increased patrolling at Northern Border crossings, enhanced biometric checks and expediting the US-VISIT program which monitors exit and entry data. The program is not expected to be fully operational until 2010 and exit data are not uniformly collected, and entry data are not fully automated.

Protecting the North Country's dairy farmers: Schumer said that protecting local dairy farmers from low milk prices will continue to be a priority. With the MILC program set to expire late this year, Schumer intends to make preserving a system to give New York's dairy farmers they support they need a major priority in the coming year. Last year, Schumer joined Senator Specter as the leading sponsors of the National Dairy Equity Act, which would would act like a regional dairy pact

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SOUTHERN TIER AGENDA

Schumer's agenda to boost the local economy and improve the lives of residents in the Southern Tier includes the following:

Improving Route 12: Schumer, who secured \$7 million for Route 12 improvements in the FY05 budget, will continue to support the efforts of the task force to develop improvements along the road. Schumer said that Route 12 is a critical artery for the Southern Tier and that the improvements will spur economic development along the corridor.

Supporting research at Binghamton University: Schumer said he would push for the continued support for Binghamton University's Small Scale Systems Packaging Center as well as other defense and research related endeavors. Schumer said Binghamton University research will bring many research and technical jobs to the area and leads to greater economic development in the Southern Tier.

Promoting job growth at local companies including Lockheed Martin and Endicott Interconnect: Schumer will continue efforts to help local companies successfully win contracts that will boost the Southern Tier job market. For example, Schumer will continue to push the federal government to give Lockheed Martin contracts for its US 101 helicopters. Schumer will also focus on helping Endicott Interconnect secure TSA certification of its Sure Scan technology.

Securing TAA benefits for those out of work: Schumer will also work to help workers who have been impacted by lay-offs due to trade at Southern Tier companies secure Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) – benefits under a federal program that guarantees unemployment insurance and job re-training to the workers layed-off because of foreign competition. A growing number of companies that have been determined eligible for TAA benefits have been subject to a waiting list of several months. Schumer said that he will focus his efforts on getting and expediting these benefits for upstate New York workers and that he will focus his efforts on M&T Picture Display in Horseheads by lobbying state and federal officials to send these workers this critical aid.

WESTERN NEW YORK AGENDA

Schumer's agenda to boost the local economy and improve the lives of residents in Western New York includes the following:

Getting traffic moving on the Peace Bridge: Schumer said that he will continue to work to improve traffic conditions on the Peace Bridge. In the summer of 2004, traffic on the bridge caused 5 hour delays at times. After Schumer called on Customs to solve shift change and staffing issues at the customs stations, processing times for cars improved by up to 50%, and the delays were substantially reduced. And in December, after years of work by Schumer the Department of Homeland Security announced that it will move all Customs facilities to Canada. And just this week Schumer persuaded the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to endorse a reduced US plaza in its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), moving Shared Border Management at the Peace Bridge another step closer to completion.

Maximizing the impact of the Jamestown, Niagara Falls and Buffalo-Lackawanna Renewal Communities: In 2004, Schumer passed legislation that dramatically increased the size of the Jamestown, Niagara Falls and Buffalo-Lackawanna Renewal Communities. This year Schumer will encourage Western New York businesses to take advantage of these new benefits. Schumer said that the size of the area where tax breaks are available to local companies is dramatically increasing and that as a result there will now be an estimated \$400 million in each of the Renewal Communities in important tax incentives and development initiatives to New Yorkers and New York businesses. The expanded Buffalo-Lackawanna Renewal Community includes the area where the new Bass Pro Store will locate as well as the outer harbor waterfront.

Developing the Buffalo Waterfront: Schumer has been a leading advocate of efforts to develop Buffalo's outer harbor. Schumer, who has secured millions for the development efforts, most recently in April hosted a delegation of Buffalo elected and economic development officials at Battery Park City in Manhattan to discuss how the Battery Park City project can serve as a model for Buffalo's outer harbor redevelopment efforts. Schumer secured \$5 million to improve road access to the harbor and the development of the waterfront remains a top priority of the Senator in 2005. This year, Schumer will push to get things moving toward providing better access to the waterfront with that money and also encourage businesses to take advantage of Renewal Communities benefits there.

Designating the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area: This year the National Park Service is expected to complete the resource study for which Schumer secured funding. The resource study is the first step toward a Congressional Designation of Niagara Falls as a National Heritage Area. This year, Schumer will also work with those involved to determine the best plan for who will manage and oversee the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area when it is designated. Schumer said that the Area will have a significant benefit to the local tourism area and that it will spur economic development in the region.

Redevelopment of the Niagara Airport: Schumer will continue to push for the redevelopment of the Niagara Airport to create a commercial and tourism hub for the Niagara Falls area. Schumer has been a long time advocate for bringing air service choice to Western New York, having brought Southwest, and Independence Airlines to service Buffalo Niagara International Airport. Schumer identified the redevelopment of the Niagara Airport as the next step to maximizing the benefits of air service on the Western New York economy.

Supporting and promoting the Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus: Schumer said that he will

continue to support the **UB Center for Excellence in Bioinformatics** and the **Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute** on the Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus. Federal funds that Schumer has secured in the past have made possible high-performance computing, high-end visualization, genomics, proteomics and bioimaging to advance health care science and has made Buffalo a nationally recognized center for this cutting edge science. Schumer said that promoting the Medical Campus will serve as a catalyst for job creation in Buffalo as well as for the revitalization of downtown Buffalo.

Protecting Western New York's dairy farmers: Schumer said that protecting local dairy farmers from low milk prices will continue to be a priority. With the MILC program set to expire late this year, Schumer intends to make preserving a system to give New York's dairy farmers they support they need a major priority in the coming year. Last year, Schumer joined Senator Specter as the leading sponsors of the National Dairy Equity Act, which would act like a regional dairy pact and would serve as an alternative to the current MILC program that could boost the income of New York's dairy farmers by \$53 million more than under MILC annually and save the federal government hundreds of millions of dollars. Schumer looks forward to continuing the fight for New York's dairy farmers in the new Congress.

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